

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action dated May 18, 2006 (hereinafter Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the 3-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due. However, the Office is expressly authorized to charge any deficiencies or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

Claims 1-8 and 22-29 are pending. Claims 9-21 and 30-42 were previously withdrawn in response to the Restriction Requirement dated February 8, 2006. Claims 9-21 and 30-42 are herein cancelled pursuant the instructions stated at page 2 of the Office Action requiring that the non-elected claims be cancelled. Applicants respectfully state, as was previously stated with respect to the withdrawal of the claims made in response to the Restriction Requirement, that the cancellation of Claims 9-21 and 30-42 is made without prejudice to Applicants' right to pursue protection for the non-elected claims through a separate prosecution.

In the Office Action Claims 1-8 and 22-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) as being anticipated by U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2004/0215624 to Gonzalez (hereinafter Gonzalez). Applicants have amended independent Claims 1 and 22 to emphasize certain aspects of the invention. Applicants have also added independent Claim 43. As described herein, both the claim amendments and the newly-presented claim, as discussed herein, are fully supported throughout the Specification. No new matter has been introduced through the claim amendments.

Applicants' Invention

It may be helpful to reiterate certain aspects of Applicants' invention prior to addressing the cited reference. One embodiment of the invention, typified by Claim 1, as amended, is a method for storing electronic documents. The method can include

associating an associative object with at least one electronic document, wherein the associative object uniquely corresponds to an image that is displayed in a user interface. The image, more particularly can be that of a physical seal, stamp, or tape. (See, e.g., Specification, paragraphs [0007], [0021], [0032], [0044], and [0045].) The method also can include displaying the image within the user interface and moving it as the associative object is associated with the at least one electronic document. (See, e.g., Specification, paragraphs [0025]-[0027].) The visual movement of the image visually simulates a seal, stamp, or tape being affixed to the at least one electronic document. (See, e.g., Specification, paragraph [0031].)

Additionally, the method can include generating an audio simulation of the displayed image being affixed to the at least one electronic document as the displayed image is moved adjacent to or over another image representative of the at least one electronic document. (See, e.g., Specification, paragraph [0037].) The method further can include storing at least one metadata attribute as a characteristic related to the associative object, and modifying a storage characteristic of the at least one electronic document based on one of the metadata attributes.

The Claims Define Over The Prior Art

Both independent Claim 1 and independent Claim 22, as already noted, were rejected as anticipated by Gonzalez. Gonzalez is directed to a "host website" system and method for digitally labeling websites using digital labels which represent characteristics and qualities of the websites. (See Paragraphs [0014]-[0016].)

Although Gonzalez discloses the use of digital labels for websites, Gonzalez does not expressly or inherently teach the type of websites provided by Applicants' invention. Nor does Gonzalez utilize digital labels in the manner provided by Applicants' invention.

Gonzalez's labels are for websites and the nature of the websites is dictated by this particular use. The nature, or type, of the digital labels provided by Gonzalez are explicitly described in a portion of the reference cited in the Office Action:

"A 'label' is something which identifies contents, or provides information about the subscriber or his website. Generally, the labels are multi-parameter digital labels. That is, a plurality of labels, each one conveying unambiguous qualitative data about an item, its maker, or its owner, in digital form are created. This permits an item to be identified by computers according to the presence, absence, or configuration of the labels. An example of two-parameter labeling is to label a list of people. In computer field "A", place a "0" or a "1" to indicate if a person is male or female, respectively. In field "B", place a 0 to indicate a college graduate, and a blank (null entry) otherwise. Should one want to identify males who are not college graduates, the computer would search Field A for 0s, and Field B for null entries. The conjunction of the two sets would yield the desired list of males. (Paragraph [0034]; see also FIGS. 4a – 4k.)

The quoted language reveals that Gonzalez's digital labels are not iconic symbols that correspond to a physical label, such as a seal, stamp, or tape, as expressly recited in amended Claims 1 and 22. Instead, Gonzalez's digital provide qualitative data represented by alphabetic characters or numbers. This precludes Gonzalez's providing a user the sense of associating an associative object with one or more electronic documents by performing the physical act, even if only simulated, of affixing a stamp, seal, or tape to another physical item representing an electronic document. (See, e.g., Specification, paragraphs [0007], [0021], [0039], [0043], and [0044].)

Given the nature of Gonzalez's digital labels, it is not surprising that Gonzalez wholly fails to teach anything comparable to simulating the affixing of a seal, stamp, or tape to an electronic document, as also recited in amended Claims 1 and 22. As noted in the Office Action, Gonzalez displays an image that represents a menu of user choices, which are selected when a menu item is clicked-on or checked by a user. As described in Gonzalez:

"[A] 'List Yourself' button on the screen is pressed by a subscriber or user. The user is presented with a display similar to the one shown in FIG. 4a in which he is advised that the Host Website is directed to listings in relation to the Philippines. The user is then presented with several choices: Open a Questions and Answers text; Create a New Personal Listing; Create a New General Listing; Amend a Listing; and Delete a Listing. Each of these choices results in a discrete module being opened. Provision is made for a benign cookie which is extinguished once a listing is completed, and whose presence at this stage would indicate a listing-in-process that was not completed in one session, noting where the listing left off; past answers can be retrieved from a temporary file in the Host Website database, so that the subscriber does not have to re-enter the data." (Paragraph [0074].)

The presentation of selectable-menu items comprising alphanumeric characters is totally at variance with an iconic representation of a seal, stamp, or tape. It thus further follows that Gonzalez neither expressly nor inherently teaches the simulated affixing of a physical seal, stamp, or tape to an iconic representation of an electronic document. In particular, Gonzalez nowhere teaches moving a displayed image within a user interface, as an associative object is associated with one or more electronic documents, so as to

visually simulate a seal, stamp, or tape being affixed to the one or more electronic documents. Thus, Gonzalez neither expressly nor inherently teaches this feature, recited in both Claims 1 and 22.

Given Gonzalez's lack of any teaching for associating an associative object with a physical document in a manner that corresponds to physically affixing to the document a physical object, Gonzalez, not surprisingly, further fails to teach generating an audio representation of the physical act of affixing an object to another object, as also recited in Claims 1 and 22. Indeed, Gonzalez nowhere even mentions an audio rendering of any kind. Gonzalez's digital seals comprise alphanumeric characters, as already noted, and are constructed using conventional toolbars and user interface workspaces. (See, e.g., FIGS. 4a – 4k.) Nowhere is a simulation of the physical act of object affixation apparent in Gonzalez. Thus, Gonzalez has no reason to generate any sounds simulating the affixing one object to another object, as recited in Claims 1 and 22.

Accordingly, Gonzalez fails to expressly or inherently teach every feature recited in Claims 1 and 22. Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that Claims 1 and 22 each define over the prior art. Applicants further respectfully submit that whereas each of the remaining dependent claims depends from one of the amended independent claims, these remaining dependent claims likewise define over the prior art.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the

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Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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